

MEMORIAL  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF IOWA,

*In relation to a railroad from Dubuque to Keokuk.*

MARCH 1, 1848.

Referred to the Committee on Public Lands, and ordered to be printed.

MEMORIAL to Congress for a donation of land to aid in the construction of a railroad from Dubuque to Keokuk, in the State of Iowa.

*To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:*

Your memorialists, the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, desirous of encouraging agriculture and facilitating commerce with our sister States; and through them to foreign States, respectfully represent: That the obstructions to the navigation of the Mississippi river, at what is called the upper and lower rapids, are a great barrier to the trade and commerce of Iowa, as well as of Illinois and Wisconsin. That we cannot remain indifferent to the improvement of this important national highway, which washes the eastern border of our State for three hundred miles; but, viewing this as a national work, in the early accomplishment of which the western States—nay, all the States of the Union—are more or less interested, Iowa can only express her earnest wish, as one of these States, that the Congress of the United States will see proper in its wisdom to make ample appropriations for the improvement of the navigation of this important artery of commerce, this great arm of the ocean, upon which the surplus produce of the western farmer finds its way to feed the starving population of the Old world, at the earliest practicable period. Whilst we entertain and cannot withhold the expression of these views in regard to the improvement of the rapids in the Mississippi, we beg leave to invite the attention of Congress to an object demanded alike by the interests of our State and of the general government: we allude to the necessity of the construction of a railroad from Dubuque, through the counties of Dubuque, Jones, Linn, Johnson, Washington, Henry, and Lee, to Keokuk; a work called for by the growing importance of the agricultural products of Iowa, and the importance of connecting the rich mineral regions of the northern part of Iowa with the lower Mississippi, at a point that is navigable at all seasons of the year, except a few weeks during the winter season, by which means the hardy and enterprising miner will find constant employment and increased pay for his labor,

while the farmer, through the enterprise of the merchant, will be enabled to realize the advantage of the earliest and best markets for the products of his annual toil, and the interests and prosperity of other classes of our citizens would be equally promoted.

Your memorialists would remind your honorable body, that the great mass of our community thus to be benefited by an enterprise of this kind is composed of individuals who are eager to appropriate all the surplus funds which they may realize from their industry to the purchase of government lands, and who want the benefit of the market which this will bring to their doors, to enable them to become profitable customers of the general government in the purchase of her vacant prairie lands, which otherwise would remain unsold for years to come.

Your memorialists, therefore, respectfully ask an appropriation of lands for the construction of a railroad from Dubuque to Keokuk, through the interior of the State, equal to five sections for each mile of said road, to be located in alternate sections five miles on each side of said road, or lands adjacent thereto, as the same may be conveniently obtained.

In looking back upon the rapid and powerful growth of the West in population, industry, and wealth, we are glad to acknowledge that that growth has been greatly promoted by the liberality of the general government in the appropriation of lands for objects of internal improvements in the nine States where the public lands are situate. In every instance it is believed that the improvements made, in whole or in part, by grants of public lands, have resulted in corresponding benefits to the general government in the increased sale of those lands. So we confidently believe it would be in regard to the project under consideration. It is a narrow view of the subject to say that the government can ever be the loser by extending aid to objects of this kind in a border State: increased emigration, the sale and cultivation of immense bodies of lands which otherwise would remain unsold and uncultivated for years, the impetus given to agriculture, commerce, and general prosperity of the States, the accession thereby offered to the aggregate wealth of nations, all forbid it.

By the accomplishment of this enterprise, the large prairies on the line of its route could be supplied with timber for fencing and building purposes from the pine regions of the upper Mississippi and upper Cedar rivers, which would bring into market large tracts of fertile lands, now too remote from timber to be subject to cultivation without some such facility as would be afforded by the proposed railroad.

But, acting on the belief that the State and nation will both be benefited by the grant we ask for, we commend the subject to the early consideration of Congress, and trust that our prayer may be granted under such conditions in regard to the transportation of the mails, troops, and munitions of war, as the general government may deem fit.

*Resolved*, That the secretary of state be requested to furnish one copy of this memorial to the Senate of the United States, and one copy to each of our Representatives in Congress.

J. B. BROWNE,

*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

THOMAS HUGHES,

*President of the Senate.*

Approved January 22, 1848.

ANSEL BRIGGS.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, IOWA,  
Iowa City, February 4, 1848.

I, Elisha Cutler, jr., secretary of the State of Iowa, do hereby certify that the above is a true copy of the original on file in this office.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand  
[L. s.] and affixed the "great seal of the State of Iowa."

ELISHA CUTLER, JR.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, IOWA,  
Iowa City, February 7, 1848.

SIR: Accompanying this I have the honor to transmit to you, to be laid before the Senate of the United States, a copy of a memorial of the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, relative to a railroad from Dubuque to Keokuk, in this State.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

ELISHA CUTLER, JR.,  
Secretary of the State of Iowa.

HON. GEORGE M. DALLAS,  
President of the U. S. Senate,  
Washington, D. C.

